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SECSTATE FOR AF/S, IIP; PARIS FOR LINDA COWHER AND MARION SALVANET;

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OIIP](#) [KDEM](#) [KCOR](#) [ECON](#) [LT](#)

SUBJECT: LESOTHO: SPEAKER PROGRAM EVALUATION - MR. ROBERT SMOLIK,  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

REF: LINDA COWHER E-MAIL (5/21/07)

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¶1. SUMMARY: From July 13-17, Embassy Maseru hosted international speaker Mr. Robert Smolik, currently the State Department's Diplomat in Residence at the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy at the University of Michigan. Mr. Smolik's presentations on democracy, good governance, and anti-corruption came at a timely point in Lesotho's history when political turbulence has forced many Basotho to delve into these issues. Although Mr. Smolik's busy travel schedule could only accommodate one and a half program days in Maseru, post assesses that he had a great impact on those he addressed. Particularly valuable sessions included his presentation to a conference put together by the local NGO "Transformation Resource Center" and a lively discussion session brought together by Lesotho's Directorate on Corruption and Economic Offenses. We rate Mr. Smolik's program highly and recommend him for future speaking engagements. END SUMMARY.

¶2. Below is Embassy Maseru's official review of Mr. Robert Smolik's program.

¶A. NAME OF SPEAKER AND DATE OF PROGRAM

Mr. Robert Smolik, an FSO currently serving as a Diplomat in Residence at the University of Michigan, conducted a program on democracy, and good governance, and anti-corruption in Maseru, Lesotho, on July 13-17, 2007.

¶B. BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TOPICS, VENUES, AND AUDIENCES ADDRESSED

Embassy Maseru's Public Affairs Section (PAS) arranged three major speaking engagements (and two media appearances, see below) for Mr. Smolik during his 1.5 programming days in Maseru.

PAS successfully partnered with three local institutions to allow Mr. Smolik access to Lesotho's civil society, economic development planners, and anti-corruption law enforcement personnel. His presentations brought to Lesotho a global perspective on democracy, good governance, economic development, and anti-corruption strategies. He gave presentations at:

-- The National Convention Center, hosted by the Transformation Resource Center (audience: civil society groups, political parties, faith-based organizations, the Independent Electoral Commission)

-- The Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC) Boardroom, hosted by the LNDC (audience: LNDC staff members)

-- Lehakoe Club, hosted by the Directorate on Corruption and Economic Offenses (DCEO) (audience: members of the Lesotho Mounted Police Force's Child Protection Unit, Lesotho Revenue Authority agents, Police Complaints Commission representatives,

police Anti-Corruption Unit officers, and DCEO staff members)

#### C. AUDIENCE SIZE

Mr. Smolik directly addressed 300-400 individuals, and reached many more through mass media outreach (see below). General audience numbers were as anticipated or greater. The Transformation Resource Center event packed a large room at Lesotho's National Convention Center to capacity.

#### D. EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SPEAKER IN COMMUNICATION OF INTENDED MESSAGES TO TARGET AUDIENCE

Mr. Smolik's participation in the Transformation Resource Center's "State of Democracy in Lesotho" forum was well received, and he fielded a great number of questions from the audience. Mr. Smolik stood his ground during a healthy debate with a professor from Lesotho's National University who was a fellow speaker at the event. When asked difficult questions about the situation in Zimbabwe and the use of U.S. military force, Mr. Smolik responded well. His experience working with the OECD's anti-corruption mechanisms came in handy at the Directorate on Corruption and Economic Offenses event, and he was able to offer concrete suggestions regarding steps Lesotho could take to confront graft.

#### E. QUALITY OF IIP SUPPORT

Embassy Maseru is greatly appreciative of ARS Paris's support during the entirety of this program. The lines of communication between our post and Linda Cower were open and effective. As a small "PD-light" post with limited resources, Embassy Maseru is delighted to have been offered this opportunity. We were in frequent communication with Linda Cower and Marion Salvanet regarding Mr. Smolik's schedule, and appreciated their arrangement of a pre-departure briefing for Mr. Smolik.

#### F. IMMEDIATE RESULTS/IMPACT

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While highlighting the importance of good governance, Mr. Smolik's presentations directly addressed two of Embassy Maseru's Mission Performance Plan goals: 1) democratic practices and systems; and 2) economic growth and development. This program fulfilled a number of current post objectives, including: 1) sharing good governance expertise at a time when Lesotho is experiencing political turbulence; 2) sharing economic development strategies gained from the experiences of other countries; and 3) sharing anti-corruption strategies tested in the United States and other nations. Mr. Smolik reached out a diverse group of individuals and organizations, all of whom have a vested interest in the future of democracy, good governance, and economic development in Lesotho. He emphasized the necessity of including all sectors of society in efforts to build a good democracy, as well as the importance of cooperative work between NGO's, religious groups, public service providers, government departments, and ordinary citizens.

#### G. PRESS PLACEMENT REPORTING

Embassy Maseru arranged an interview with Mr. Smolik on Ultimate FM, a youth-oriented government-owned radio station. The interview was broadcast live on Monday, July 16. Embassy Maseru also arranged an interview with Mr. Smolik on Lesotho Television (LTV), the nation's sole domestic television station. We estimate the viewership of LTV at approximately 30,000.  
ANDERSON